

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0603

March 3, 2020

Director Robert Redfield, MD
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Director Redfield,

I appreciate the steps that you and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are taking to protect Americans from COVID-19. As the number of cases of the virus continues to rise across the United States, most experts anticipate that sustained human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 is inevitable. It is critical that states have the infrastructure in place to respond to a worst case scenario.

Hospitals, clinics and departments of public health in rural areas and small towns will play a significant role in the country's response to COVID-19, therefore, I call on you to ensure that rural and small health systems receive robust resources to screen for and mitigate against the impacts of the virus. Each rural hospital, clinic and department of public health must be able to quickly refer a patient sample for testing with timely results, health workers must have the resources needed to protect themselves from the virus, and public health officials must have the ability to educate their communities on the symptoms of the virus, how members of the community can protect themselves from the virus and the steps they should take should they suspect they have been exposed to the virus.

As the CDC continues to share information and resources at the state and local levels, I trust that you will ensure rural communities are included in important conversations about preventing and addressing the transmission of COVID-19. Through outreach we have done to hospitals and clinics throughout Colorado's 3rd Congressional District we have received mostly positive feedback about communication and planning, but there are still instances where increased communication from federal and state agencies coordinating the COVID-19 response may be necessary. On a less positive note, we have heard from some providers that they are already seeing supply shortages due to the outbreak in China and resulting shipping delays. Several small providers have also stated they do not have enough respirators or masks for their staff and typically have a hard time getting an adequate supply from the state. These issues must be addressed systemwide. I am sending a similar message to Colorado's coordinating agencies. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office should you or your team need assistance.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Tipton
Member of Congress